

ment of a parasite, either animal or vegetable, which under certain circumstances attacks alimentary substances, especially pastry, communicating to them a bright red colour resembling that of arterial blood.

According to the interpretation of several historical facts given by M. Ehrenberg, who has published a very interesting and erudite work upon this production, its appearance in the dark ages must have given rise to fatal errors, by causing the condemnation of unhappy victims to capital punishments, for crimes of which they were totally innocent. It is in fact to this phænomenon that we must refer all those instances of blood found in bread, on consecrated wafers, &c. which the credulity of our fathers attributed to witchcraft or regarded as prodigies of fatal presage.

On the 14th of July last, I was at the Chateau du Parquet, near Rouen, with M. Aug. Le-Prévost: every one knows, that for about ten days at that time the temperature had been exceedingly high. The servants, much astonished at what they saw, brought us half a fowl, roasted the previous evening, which was literally covered with a gelatinous layer of a very intense carmine red, and only of a bright rose colour where the layer was thinner. A cut melon also presented some traces of it. Some cooked cauliflower which had been thrown away, and which I did not see, also, according to the people of the house, presented the same appearance. Lastly, three days afterwards, the leg of a fowl was also attacked by the same production.

Examining it with a microscope of middling power, lent me by M. Le Prévost, I readily convinced myself that it was the same thing which had been observed by M. Ehrenberg; for a specimen of it, developed upon cooked rice, which had been sent by M. Ehrenberg to Dr. Rayer some years since, had been submitted to my inspection by that gentleman.

Whether it be an animalcule (*Monas prodigiosa*) as M. Ehrenberg thinks, or a fungus (*Zoogalactina imetropha*) as M. Sette considers it, the individuals composing it are so extremely small that their diameter is not more than  $\frac{1}{7000}$  of a millimetre, and it requires a magnifying power of at least 800 diameters to observe them satisfactorily. This parasite is propagated with great facility when sown under favourable conditions,—in cooked rice for example placed between two plates or in closed vessels. M. P. Col, a chemist of Padua, has employed it in tinging silk various shades of rose colour.—*Comptes Rendus*, xxxv. p. 145.

#### IRISH MOLLUSCA.

*To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.*

Windsor Lodge, Monkstown, co. Dublin,  
September 16, 1852.

GENTLEMEN,—Upon my friend Dr. Battersby showing the specimens of *Cylichna* we took in Birterbuy Bay to Mr. Clark of Bath, he pronounced that they were the *Cylichna strigella*, and not the *C. conulus*, as stated in the September Number of the 'Annals.'

I am, Gentlemen, yours most truly obliged,

WILLIAM W. WALPOLE.